

Draft policy



Anti-Bullying Policy

Adopted by the Board of Governors October 2018.

Signed: _____ Chair

The Anti-Bullying Policy

What is bullying?

The Department's publication "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection" defines bullying as "deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself."

It is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

All pupils have a right to be taught in a secure, caring environment, free from the threat of psychological and physical abuse.

Forms of bullying

- Bullying can range from hurtful teasing to serious physical harm. Forms of bullying in school can include (this is not an exhaustive list):
- Hitting, kicking, pinching, throwing things or using implements to cause deliberate injury to another pupil;
- Spitting at or threatening a pupil;
- Racist, homophobic, sectarian or other offensive name-calling;
- Taunting or disparaging a pupil, his/her abilities or achievements, physical appearance or way of talking, or his/her family;
- Sending unpleasant notes;
- Extortion of money or items of property;
- Spreading rumours and malicious gossip about a pupil, including about the pupil's family;
- Deliberately damaging or destroying a pupil's belongings or food;
- Not talking to a pupil or not letting him/her join in activities;
- Locking a pupil in a room or cupboard;

Signs and Symptoms

In spite of a positive and supportive climate within the school, pupils may still be reluctant to report instances of bullying, perhaps because they are fearful of the consequences. It is often left to an observant parent or teacher to detect signs of emotional distress in the pupil and, in time, to identify bullying as its cause. Parents and teachers must, therefore, be vigilant at all times for such signs.

The School's View

St Jarlath's Primary school is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Steps to Creating an Anti-bullying Environment

- Effective classroom management to ensure an anti-bullying environment at all times
- Children are constantly reminded of the school rules and regulations
- The implementation of P.D., throughout the school, which discusses issues in a non-threatening environment, as well as Circle Time lessons and The PATHS Programme
- Knowledge of personal safety via assembly themes or informal discussion with teacher in the classroom.
- Close liaison with parents in relation to children's self esteem and personal needs
- Incident book is kept to record incidents of bullying which may come to the attention of any member of staff.
- Ensuring that the children are aware that the use of mobile phones within the school is strictly forbidden as these can be a potential source of bullying particularly if they are camera phones.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens;
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Mrs. J Campbell, designated teacher for child protection or Ms. M. Smyth, deputy designated teacher for child protection;
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken;
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures;
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
 - In some circumstances a record of an incident may need to be recorded. This could be a child protection issue or of a bullying nature. In the latter case, each class teacher will record the incident in the Class Incident book. See full procedure in the school's Anti Bullying Policy. Allegations of bullying by a member of staff are recorded using a proforma posted on the staff room notice board. All Child Protection disclosures must be relayed to Mrs. J Campbell (DT) or to Ms. M Smyth (Dep. DT) in her absence, as soon as possible after the disclosure has been made.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances;

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying;
- Advising their children to report any bullying to Mrs. J Campbell, designated teacher for child protection or Ms M Smyth, deputy designated teacher for child protection, and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;

- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves;

Procedures For Dealing With Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

1. Class teacher talking calmly to pupils which may help pupils to reflect on their own actions which in turn may impact on future behaviour;
2. On certain occasions the bully may be punished in accordance with our Discipline Policy;
3. Providing reassurance, support and protection for pupils;
4. Consulting with parents of the victim/bully when the incident is of a serious nature;
5. Compiling brief report in our Incident Book of serious instances of bullying

It is our intention that both pupils and parents are aware of how they can draw their concerns about bullying to the attention of staff in confidence. We also make it clear that any such concerns will be investigated and if substantiated taken seriously and acted upon. A senior member of staff or teacher will report back to parents, depending on the incident, on the steps which have been taken by the school in response to an expressed concern about bullying.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the incident but may include some sanctions as set out in our discipline/positive behaviour policy. His/her behaviour will be monitored until we are satisfied that the bullying has stopped.

Contact With Outside Agencies

- This may include parents as previously mentioned.
 - Other agencies may be contacted in extreme cases of bullying. These include the Education Welfare Officer, the Behaviour Management Team, the Educational Psychologist, the Child Protection Support Service for Schools and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be kept under review and amended, after consultation when appropriate. The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through the Incident Report Books. All groups involved in the school: pupils, parents, staff and governors will be asked to share their views. This may be done in focus groups, class workshops, through the use of questionnaires or informal interviews. Circulars from DENI, EA and CCMS will also be taken account of.

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